

In the claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method of verifying taxes on a batch of customer telecommunications bills initially generated, and ultimately to be sent out, by an entity other than a telecommunications service provider, comprising the steps of:

downloading, from a mainframe computer, to a local server operated by the telecommunications service provider, billing data associated with customer accounts, the billing data having been used by the entity other than the telecommunications service provider to generate hold bills that are scheduled to be sent as customer bills to customers of the telecommunications service provider, wherein the billing data includes prebill data that is downloaded on a day of verification and demand print data that can be downloaded prior to the corresponding prebill data, wherein further the hold bills including billing data includes hold bill tax charges that were ~~independently~~ calculated by the entity other than the telecommunications service provider;

populating a first database with a portion of the billing data;

performing pre-calculation functions on another portion of the billing data and further populating the first database with results of the pre-calculation functions;

providing an option for immediately calculating calculated tax results without displaying predetermined categories of information stored in the first database;

if the option for immediately calculating calculated tax results is not selected then the predetermined categories of information stored in the first database, encompassing at least a subset of the results of the pre-calculation functions, are displayed prior to the calculation of the calculated tax results;

~~displaying predetermined categories of information stored in the database the categories of information encompassing at least a subset of the results of the pre-calculation functions;~~

independently from the mainframe computer, calculating, by the telecommunications service provider, calculated tax results for each of several charges in the billing data utilizing the billing data populated in the first database and local tax rates and surcharge information populated in a Tax TAR ("taxing area responsibility") database; and

storing the calculated tax results in the database;

receiving entry of an account number into a worksheet being displayed and automatically filling the worksheet with the calculated tax results for the account number;

comparing the calculated tax results displayed within the worksheet with the hold bills tax charges on the customer hold bills to verify ~~the accuracy of~~ the hold bills tax charges; ~~and~~

when the calculated tax results match the hold bills tax charges, authorizing the entity other than the telecommunications service provider to release the batch of hold bills, print the hold bills as customer bills and send the customer bills to the customers; and

resolving errors on the customer bill detected from the comparing.

2. Cancelled.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the pre-calculation functions include summing toll telephone charges.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the predetermined categories describe elements of individual charges.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the displaying ~~step~~ is performed on a computer.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the computer is in communication with an electronic data network.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, further comprising loading the first database with tax rate information.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising electronically saving the tax results.

9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 8, further comprising utilizing the calculated tax results for resolving questions.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the local server and the first database are integrated in a single machine.

11. (Currently Amended) A method of verifying hold bill taxes on account charges on a customer hold bill, the hold bill being a bill that is scheduled to be sent as a customer bill to a customer by a first entity on behalf of a second entity the first entity having independently calculated the hold bill taxes, the method comprising the steps of:

maintaining a tax rate information database that is in communication with a data network;

maintaining a second database that includes account charges;

automatically applying the tax rate information to the account charges and storing a calculated tax result, the calculated tax result being independently calculated by the second entity;

receiving entry of an account number into a worksheet being displayed and automatically filling the worksheet with the calculated tax result on a computer that is in communication with the data network;

comparing the calculated tax result displayed in the worksheet with the hold bill taxes appearing on the hold bill; and

when the calculated tax result displayed in the worksheet matches the hold bill taxes, the second entity authorizing the first entity to print and to send the hold bill as a customer bill.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of maintaining the database includes downloading account information from a mainframe computer.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the account information includes prebill and demand print data.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising supplying the tax rate information to the mainframe computer.

15. (Original) The method of claim 11, further comprising scanning the hold bill and storing an image thereof.

16. (Previously presented) The method of claim 15, further comprising applying optical character recognition software to the image and storing a file representative of characters obtained.

17. (Previously presented) The method of claim 16, further comprising electronically comparing at least a portion of the file with the calculated tax result.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the second database is in communication with a local server.

19. (Previously presented) The method of claim 11, further comprising using the calculated tax result to identify errors on the hold bill.

20. (Currently Amended) A method of verifying ~~the accuracy of~~ tax charges on a hold bill generated for a customer account by an outsourced entity, the hold bill being one that is scheduled to be sent directly to the customer by the outsourced entity as a customer bill ~~to a customer~~ upon verification[[,]] by an entity providing service, other than billing service, ~~directly to the customer, of the accuracy of the tax charges indicated on the hold bill,~~ the method comprising the steps of:

downloading data, including customer charges, to the entity providing service, other than billing service, ~~including customer charges, that is the basis for hold bill generation,~~ to a local server;

on the local server, automatically determining which customer charges are subject to taxation;

on the local server, automatically calculating the a tax for the customer charges subject to taxation and storing calculated tax results;

receiving entry of an account number in a worksheet being displayed and automatically filling the worksheet with the calculated tax results on a user computer; and

on the local server, comparing the calculated tax results displayed in the worksheet to the tax charges on the hold bill,

wherein the hold bill is generated on a mainframe computer operated by the outsourced entity, the tax charges on the hold bill are independently calculated by the outsourced entity the local server is operated separately from the mainframe computer by the entity providing service, other than billing service, and the entity providing service, other than billing service, independently calculates the calculated tax results, and

wherein when the calculated tax results match the tax charges on the hold bill, authorizing the outsourced entity, by the entity providing service, other than billing service, to send the hold bill as a customer bill to the customer.

21-34. Cancelled